

🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾

# Puppy Prints



---

North Carolina Puppy Raising Program Newsletter

Winter 2003

---

## Anton and Fonda Graduate from Guiding Eyes for the Blind!

### It Takes A Village of Volunteer Puppy Raisers by Will and Trudy Pendergraft

For those of you that have not been fortunate enough to raise a guide-dog puppy for Guiding Eyes for the Blind, it's like one big 'goose bump.' Our first puppy, Anton, arrived in our home during the month of June 2000 and we had twenty wonderful months together. During this time, we not only learned a lot about how to raise a puppy, but we also learned a great deal about ourselves, the virtues of patience, persistence and perseverance and learned many life-long lessons that will continue to have a profound impact on how we approach challenges.

After almost two years of weekly puppy classes under the tutelage of Sherry Dodson and Kay Jackson, dozens of nylabones, hundreds of swimming lessons and socialization that involved daily trips to work, shopping at the grocery store, outings to restaurants and several plane trips, it was time for us to take our puppy Anton to Guiding Eyes in Yorktown Heights, NY for his in-for-training test. This is a test which decides the fate of each dog as to whether or not they have the fortitude to become a guide by observing their behavior during gun shots, umbrellas opening in their faces, exposure to other dogs and basic obedience. In less than fifteen minutes, a decision is made as to whether the dog will actually proceed to formal harness training.



Will and Trudy with graduates, Bill and Anton



Well, Anton passed his test and for the next six months, we received updates on Anton's training. He learned how to walk in a straight line, how to make right and left turns, how to back up, and how to prevent his handler from walking into stationary and moving obstacles and from stepping off the edge of subway platforms. He mastered each of these things in increasingly distracting and congested settings and passed the final test by doing all of them in downtown Manhattan!

In August of this year, we received the news that Anton had been matched with a visually-impaired person and that they were going to graduate the last weekend in September! We were fortunate enough to attend the graduation ceremony at Guiding Eyes and meet Anton's new life partner, Bill Zimmerman of Darlington, SC. Needless to say, Kleenex was in great demand at this event.

Both Anton and Bill were excited to visit with us after the graduation ceremony. We were overwhelmed by how much Bill loves Anton, and we could tell that after their four intense weeks of training together that they were the best of friends, a great team and that Bill's white cane was no more. Anton was happy as usual, which meant we were too (see picture), and now he is a federally-protected guide dog who is providing safe and independent travel for Bill.

Regardless of our differing political views, many of us would probably agree with Senator Clinton that raising well-rounded, well-adjusted children these days, takes a village – a tight knit community that works together for the benefit of all. Even though we do not have children, we can now relate to the phrase "It takes a village" thanks to our first GEB puppy, Anton and all of our fellow puppy raisers, but we would change that phrase to "It takes a village of volunteer puppy raisers." We would like to thank all of you who made Anton's amazing accomplishment possible. We could not have done it without all of your help, guidance and support. We thank you and Bill and Anton thank you too!

Timberlyne Animal Clinic of Chapel Hill sponsored Anton's routine veterinary care, and his food sponsor was the Pendergraft family.

## The Gillelands' "Christmas" Adventure

by Belvie Gilleland, Fonda and Halo's puppy raiser

In the midst of the early Dec. ice storm, the Gilleland family left Lexington, NC bound for a true adventure! Our first guide dog puppy was scheduled to graduate and I was determined our family would be there. As we loaded the van, our daughters, Catherine, 17 and Anna, 13 told us how "crazy" we were! We had no power, the roads were icy, and we were unsure where we would lay our heads that night. My parents, friends, and neighbors all voiced their concern and amazement that we would even consider making the trip. But, as I told them all, I was not about to miss my FIRST dog's shining moment after all she and I had been through together!

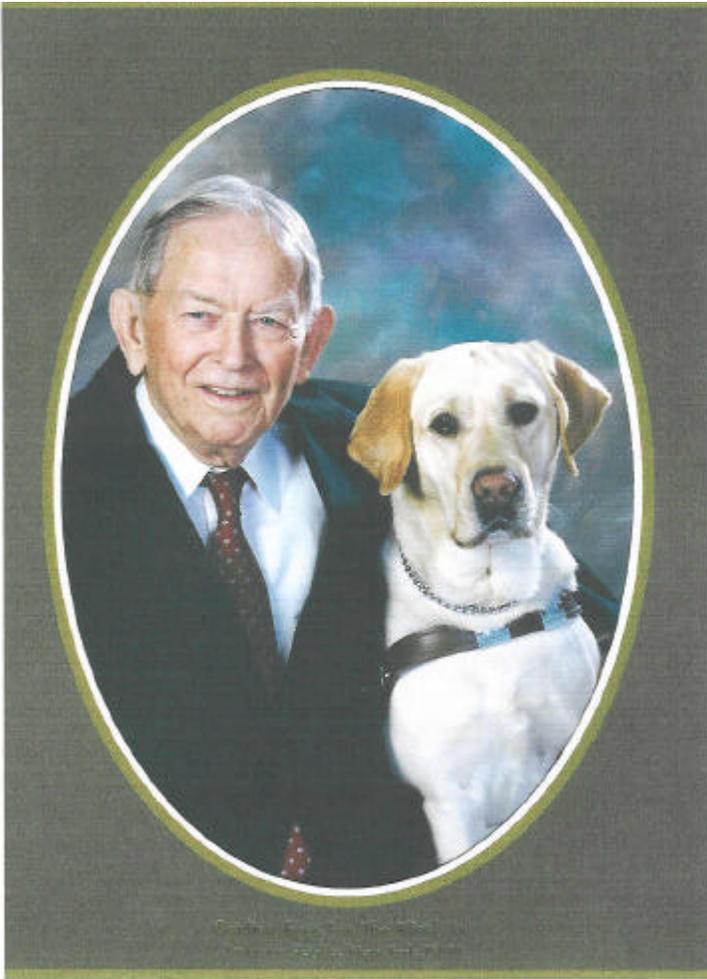
Fonda, like most all puppies, had her "issues". As I've told several people, raising Fonda was very much like raising a very "strong-willed" child. In fact, we were not sure she knew her name for the first month we had her! "Tuning-in" was not a concept Fonda thought necessary! And so, the puppy-raising journey had its ups and downs all along the way.

As Fonda grew though, with help from several Charlotte raisers, Sherry and Jane, we managed to work through most of her distractions. Well, almost... you see, Fonda always had a knack for letting you think things were going pretty well and then, BAM – she would decide that SHE NEEDED to see or smell something that was NOT on my agenda! Correction! Ha! But, with repeated, consistent training sessions, lots of praise, play, prayers, and family support she made it through the puppy program.

Fonda's IFT date was set for April and it came all too quickly. As I waited to hear how she did, I wondered which personality she would display for the test. Would Fonda "The Fabulous" or "The Full-of-herself" show up for IFT? When Sherry called, I could hardly believe "our puppy" made it! She was officially in guide dog training! Whew! My girl! Off on her own, making her way to becoming someone's working eyes and constant companion! I could hardly control my emotions! I felt like I was on a roller coaster going from the extreme pride that all our hard



Belvie and Fonda



Lawrence and Fonda

work and time had paid off to the deep selfish sadness of losing such a close relationship with my furry, complex friend.

Once in training, Fonda seemed to find her niche (or so it seemed from where I was in NC)! Training reports were good, but not outstanding. And, Jane, as usual was complimentary, but reminded us that "anything could happen". In fact, in August, Jane's report on Fonda was that she was "not expected to graduate with her class in Dec." Fonda did a lot of growing up from August to December, and much to our delight, we learned that Fonda was placed in the Nov. class (set to graduate on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, if all went well)! That's our girl!

As we sat in the Campbell lounge, I felt really glad to just be there. We had made the long trip and arrived just in time to ponder just which GEB souvenir we **had** to take home. I thought of the last few months while Fonda was at the training school. Had she found other friends, trainers and people to "take our

place" in her heart? Would she even **remember** her first family? Well, Fonda's graduation was truly a special, emotion-filled experience. I was overwhelmed with feelings for her and her graduate that words cannot describe. I thought I was "holding it together" until I saw them walk through those double doors. Then, like an unexpected tidal wave, the tears came - they were not all tears of sorrow, though, I have to admit those were there. There were many tears of anticipation, hope for the team, and pride in being a part of this gift to Lawrence (Fonda's partner). I have so many memories from graduation that I will always hold dear. But, one of the best ones was when Fonda just could not hold herself back anymore and kissed me and each one of her "first family" members, **but** then, she quickly gave Lawrence a kiss, too. In her own way, I believe she was saying "I love you ALL"!!

Lawrence is a kind, strong-spirited, 84 year old "young" person with whom we seemed to make an easy connection. He was very open in sharing his story with us. In fact, we learned that he lost his vision about the time we received Fonda as a pup! There were so many things that were just too coincidental about this whole trip that I am still in shock. As I wrote in an article for our church newsletter - God really does work in mysterious ways!! I have great difficulty talking

about the whole experience in some ways because it affects me so deeply. But, I feel really blessed to have been a part of this process. You see, Lawrence and Fonda now live in High Point, NC! Just 20 minutes from Lexington!! I really believe our family received an early Christmas present this year, gift of the spiritual kind. Though we have not heard from them since they return home, I am still so excited to just know our "yellow girl" is living close to us.

Through all the work, excitement, frustration, anticipation, sorrow, joy, and even emptiness we experience in working with these puppies, I see God's hand at work through the people and dogs of GEB. I have to believe this or I could not bear the pain I see fellow puppy raisers endure when things don't go well. Sometimes, I really wonder how Sherry, Jane and others who deal with so many puppies and people continue year after year. But, after experiencing Fonda's graduation, I think I now have a better understanding of why we do what we do. I look forward to some kind of ongoing relationship with Lawrence and his precious yellow girl. I hope to take Lawrence up on his offer of eating supper at a local barbeque stand with him, his wife and of course, his new "best friend". I know this is a rare opportunity for a graduate to live so close to their dog's puppy raiser. I feel blessed to get this chance and hopeful that things will work out well for us all...

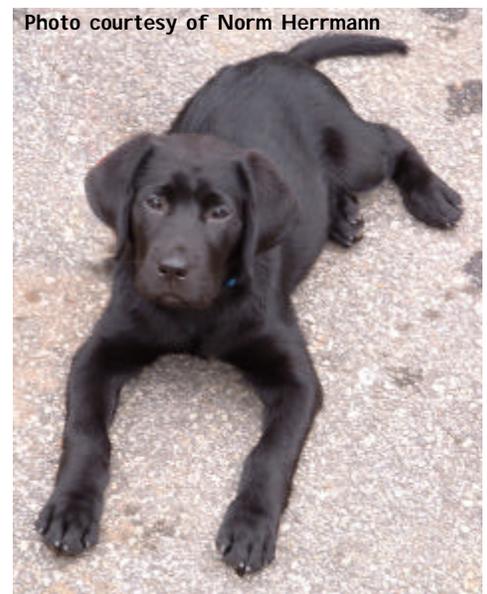
One last note - Fonda's trainer, Jill and I had the chance to talk some about Fonda's training. I was really impressed with how well Jill KNOWS Fonda! I hope we can all take comfort in knowing that the trainers really do love, care for and respect these dogs for who they are and what they do! Our pups are in good hands when they leave us.

Fonda's vet sponsor was Jordon Veterinary Hospital, and her food sponsor was the Lexington Down Town Lions Club.

## **NEW PUPPIES!**

***No, they aren't fancy boats or operating systems...they are the NCPRP's newest arrivals – Fletcher, Unix, Wendy and Yacht!***

**Fletcher**, a male black lab, was kindly and carefully delivered in October to Will and Trudy Pendergraft of Chapel Hill by the Bennett family who had just returned from GEB Vesper's in-for-training test. First-time sponsor, Jordan Lake Animal Hospital in Pittsboro, NC, provides his routine veterinary care. Southern States, Inc. of Carrboro, NC supplies Fletcher with all of the food that the growing boy needs. Will and Trudy wrote the following about their new pup.



**Fletcher**

*With our first GEB puppy graduated and our second GEB puppy in training, we had planned to take a break from puppy-raising for a while. This break turned out to be a lot shorter than we originally thought as we became lonely for another GEB puppy in less than two weeks! We told Jane we were ready for another puppy and she mentioned she might have a puppy from an "F" litter available for us. We began to wonder what our third puppy would be like, other than the usual; that is, a black or yellow lab with tattoos, big paws and a voracious appetite. Would our pup be named after a new cinematic blockbuster (Frida) or a really tasty chip company (Frito)? We ended up thinking the coolest name that begins with "F" next to Farber, Fonda, Fallon or Fala was Fletcher.*

*Soon after, we received the news from Jane that a male black lab pup named Fletcher was ready for us. When we saw his name, we knew it was meant to be! Margot Bennet and her family brought our newest addition to us and we cannot thank them and GEB enough for this fun, energetic and adorable friend. Fletcher is also known as "Fetcher," not Flesher, after his favorite pastime.*

**Unix**, a female black lab, is being raised by Rick Tanner and Glynis Gore of Carrboro, NC. Rick wrote, "On December 2<sup>nd</sup> we received shipment of a puppy from Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Unix will be the second dog that we raise for GEB. Our first dog, Badger is still in training and is a major BMOOC. Unix is calm and sweet. She sleeps through the night (she does snore), although when her paws rub against the plastic tray it wakes us up." Unix's vet sponsor is long-time supporter



**Unix**

Timberlyne Animal Clinic

in Chapel Hill, NC, and the Tanner's provide her food.



**Rachelle and Wendy**

**Wendy**, a female yellow lab, is being raised primarily by Rachelle Chryst with help from her family, Doug, Karen, Megan and Victoria Chryst all of Kings Mountain, NC. The Chryst family sponsors Wendy's food, and Kings Mountain Animal Hospital is Wendy's vet sponsor. Rachelle wrote, "We were glad to receive our little yellow bundle of energy for Christmas. One funny occurrence was when we were watching the Puppy Placement tape while she was asleep on the floor. As soon as Jane was calling 'Puppy, puppy, puppy' on the tape, Wendy jumped up and tried to get in the television. She also sees her reflection and thinks it's another dog wanting to play."

**Yacht**, a male black lab, also delivered by the Gilleland's, is being fostered by first-time raisers, Kathie and Bill Rysanek, of Raleigh, NC. Six Forks Animal Hospital in Raleigh is Yacht's vet sponsor, and the Rysanek's are his food sponsor so far. Kathie provided the following about their new pup.

*Yacht arrived at the busiest time of the year, and he got through all of the activities better than we did. I only wish I had been able to log the same amount of sleep he did. He adjusted to each new situation and group of people with no problems. I had a brainstorm one night since I was having a problem remembering where Yacht had left his deposits on our many times out in the yard. I now drop a golf ball where he "gets busy" and the next day, I "follow the dots" and clean up the yard with no problems.*

## **Where Are They Now?**

**Irish**, a female black lab, was recently released from training due to lack of confidence, and has returned home to puppy raisers Alex and Bill Bradstreet of Durham, NC. Irish's vet sponsor was Falconbridge Animal Hospital of Durham, NC, and her food was provided by the Bradstreet's.

**Vesper**, a male black Lab, raised by the Bennett family (Margot, Bruce, Gibson and Laura) of Cary, North Carolina, recently passed his in-for-training test, and was later selected for the Special Needs Program! This is a highly selective program that trains the dogs to guide those who are not only visually impaired, but have additional impairments as well. Margot provided the following story about their 3rd GEB puppy.

### **VESPER, by Margot Bennett**

Vesper came bounding into our lives in June of 2001, an 8-week-old black bundle of fur. I was a little nervous about how we would be able to handle the needs and expectations of a GEB pup, combined with two young children already taking up the majority of our time (When he arrived, Gibson was 5 and Laura was 2. It took us 3 weeks to learn the correct version of his name- Vesper was pronounced Vepper, Vespus, Vrodi and others until we got it right. ) I had not been actively involved in the raising of a puppy since before we had children and so many things had changed!



**Laura Bennett and her headrest, Vesper.**

I soon learned what a wonderful experience it would be, not only for me but for Gibson and Laura. From the beginning they knew the lingo: "He's not our dog" and "He's going to help

someone else". He came with us everywhere-preschool, the park, restaurants (he was always included on date night much to Bruce's dismay) and church. Even Decker, our 9-year-old released GEB lab, took him under his wing. Every night Vesper would saunter up to Decker and curl up with him, various paws or a head hanging over Decker's belly, At 9 weeks this was not a big deal but by 19 months and 73 pounds, Decker had a stomach of iron and a heart of gold to accept and tolerate this big bundle of love.

Vesper not only followed me everywhere, he searched for me with worried eyes if I wasn't found right away. At times it was stifling but now looking at his role in the Special Needs program I realize that's just what he was meant to be-caretaker and nurturer. I always knew Vesper was special. He was so patient, loving and tolerant. He would be in the middle of a preschool dinner with over 200 people, including 70+ children and be oblivious to the food on the floor, the noise of the crowd and would willingly let him be approached by groups of children, always rolling over for a tummy rub.

Of course, life was not perfect or easy with a lab-black fur everywhere, toys in every room (kids and dogs, a lot of which became MIA), lots of bathroom breaks outside, not to mention 2 dogs to feed, groom, exercise and socialize as well as the routine care of Gibson and Laura. But he brought us lots of laughter as well. We were in church once and he chose the time when it was the quietest during the sermon to stretch and let out a big MOAN, which made people in front of us (who did not know he was there because he was lying under the pew) wonder what I'd had for dinner. I just smiled.....

I really knew Vesper had a special purpose when he was scheduled to go IFT and the night before we were all to take him to NY he was lying in intensive care, having gone through major surgery for an intestinal blockage. With the skilled hands and loving care of those at Gentle Care Animal Hospital, as well as a big miracle from above and Vesper's sheer will and love of life, he pulled through fine. One month later, we all took that much-anticipated trip to NY for his newly scheduled IFT. More miracles-tests were cancelled that day due to extreme weather predictions, but when the day turned out to be not as threatening, they scheduled a solo IFT for Vesper. What an honor and what a wonderful staff. Jane took pictures of the testing while we huddled under cover in the rain, watching his obedience, handling and reactions to various outside stimuli. Then we get the word, "He made it!!!!" I couldn't have been more proud, until I found out a few weeks later that he had been selected to be trained for someone with Special Needs due to his gentle temperament. Now I felt like a mom whose child had graduated cum laude with honors from medical school.

Though our life is simpler now (until the next child is born in June.....) without those continual outdoor bathroom breaks and scheduled socialization outings, there is still an emptiness, a feeling of a missing appendage. But it is a hole that is filled with the remembrance of a big black dog that brought so many kids joy and knowledge of a dog's love and potential, as well as

pride and remembrance, of how much he grew and learned, and taught us as well. I can't wait for the next one.....

Vesper's vet sponsor was Dr. Trudy Bowden of Kildaire Animal Medical Center in Cary, North Carolina, and his food sponsor was Margot's father, Roy W. Roth, of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The NCPRP would like to wish Vesper the best of luck in his training!

### **Slater and London's Week of Fun!**

**Lori Sullivan filled in the NCPRP on a recent get-together with her former foster puppy, now guide dog, GEB Slater.**

*Slater came & stayed with me for a whole week alone this Fall. He and London, who I was sitting then, played very well together. Slater offered us his harness to photograph. When Slater retires, his person Deborah has vowed he will come home to me.*



**Slater and London**

### **Vet Sponsor Plaque Photographer Changing of the Guard!**

**by Sherry Dodson**

Rick Tanner has graciously volunteered to take over the big job of creating our vet sponsor plaques. We sincerely thank him for this! He will be taking the photos of the raisers and pups around the time of the general meeting at each evaluation and then return the plaques to the raisers at the next evaluation. Raisers, please arrange with Rick to get your photo taken and then remember to pick it up from him at the next evaluation. Thanks so much to Rick and everyone. Please talk to Sherry if you can't get your photo taken at the evaluation.

This brings us to sincerely thank Marie and Gary O'Neil who have artfully produced these plaques for all the years we have been giving them to the vet sponsors. They have worked very, very hard and given so much of their valuable time to be sure the plaques were just right. They have attended each evaluation despite many family and job pressures. They truly exemplify the spirit of this program and we can't thank them enough for all they have done. They are not leaving us and we hope to see them at as many evaluations as they can attend. They are just stepping down to take a well-deserved rest. Thank you, thank you Marie and Gary, you have left quite a legacy of love program wide.

**EVALUATION SCHEDULE**  
**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, February 7-8 2003**  
**Raleigh Church of Christ, Raleigh, NC**

<b>FRIDAY February 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>PUPPY</b>	<b>RAISER</b>
12:30 PM	Fallon	Cooke
1:00 PM	Garbo	Jackson
1:30 PM	Fala	Willson
2:00 PM	Eddie	Deeley
2:30 PM	Yacht	Rysanek *
3:30 PM	Farber	Scott
4:00 PM	Baldwin	Piron *
4:30 PM	Namath	Barabash
5:15 PM	Parrish	Mejia
<b>SATURDAY February 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>PUPPY</b>	<b>RAISER</b>
8:00 AM	New Pup	Bierwirth *
9:00 AM	Fletcher	Pendergraft
9:30 AM	Unix	Tanner *
10:30 AM	Garner	Osborn
11:00 AM	Caper	Quesenberry *
<b>12:00 NOON</b>	<b>General Meeting</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
1:15 PM	Halo	Gilleland
1:45 PM	Joe	Herrmann
2:15 PM	Wendy	Chryst *
3:15 PM	Kittle	Shinn
3:45 PM	Faith	Haynes *
4:30 PM	Sienna	Cooke
5:00 PM	Truman	Haynes
5:30 PM	Rhodi	Schmidt

\* Means that Raiser and Pup Need Photo Taken by Rick Tanner on Saturday Around General Meeting Time.

*SATURDAY EVENING DINNER:*

If anyone is interested, we will gather for dinner around 6:00 PM,  
and will discuss plans at the general meeting.

## Driving Directions to February 7-8 Evaluation:

Raleigh Church of Christ  
911 Barringer Dr.  
Raleigh, NC

From I-440 (beltline):

- Take Exit 1-C, Jones Franklin Rd, and go North .36 miles.
- Turn Left at Barringer, and the church building will be on the right about .11 miles.

If you get lost, feel free to call Sharon Cooke's mobile @ (919) 656-0505.

## We Want YOU! At the Triangle Area Puppy Classes!

Who: Puppy Raisers, Puppy Sitters, Friends of GEB, and Potential Volunteers who want to find out more and meet some of the GEB pups and raisers

When: Monday evenings at 7PM

Where: Variety of locations throughout the triangle

How: E-mail Will Pendergraft at [wfp3@med.unc.edu](mailto:wfp3@med.unc.edu) to be added to the puppy class e-mail distribution list to receive information about the dates, times and locations of puppy classes!

### FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

If you have pictures or stories you would like to share, then please e-mail them to:  
[pprints2000@yahoo.com](mailto:pprints2000@yahoo.com)

### MOVING?

Send address, phone, e-mail changes, and/or requests to receive puppy prints online to:  
[gae@attglobal.net](mailto:gae@attglobal.net)



**Puppy Prints Newsletter**  
Managing Editor: Will Pendergraft  
Associate Editors: Elizabeth Oliverio and Trudy Pendergraft

## UPCOMING EVENTS - 2003

### February 7-8, 2003

Evaluation, Raleigh Church of Christ,  
Raleigh, NC

### May 2-3, 2003

Evaluation, place TBD

### May 3, 2003

NCPRP Annual Dessert Social, place TBD

### August 15-16, 2003

Evaluation, place TBD

### November 14-15, 2003

Evaluation, place TBD

## MISSION STATEMENT

---

Guiding Eyes for the Blind is dedicated to enriching the lives of blind and visually impaired men and women by providing them with the freedom to travel safely, thereby assuring greater independence, dignity and new horizons of opportunity.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

---

Guiding Eyes for the Blind

North Carolina Puppy Raising Program

P.O. Box 37202, Raleigh, NC 27627

Raleigh Area: Sharon Cooke 919.677.8365

Charlotte Area: Richard Yercheck 704.296.0758

Julie Haynes 704.821.6521

Western Area: Mary Jane Gibbons 828.926.3501

Area Coordinators: Sherry&Don Dodson 919.642.0185

**WEBSITES:** [www.guiding-eyes.org](http://www.guiding-eyes.org)

[www.mindspring.com/~mefine/ncprp](http://www.mindspring.com/~mefine/ncprp)



**North Carolina Puppy Raising Program**

**P.O Box 37202**

**Raleigh, NC 27627**